



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, Ca. 94105

December 8, 2014

The Honorable Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S
U.S. House of Representatives
Attention: Ms. Julie Brown
122 N. Cortez Street, Suite 104
Prescott, AZ 86301

Dear Congressman Gosar:

Thank you for your letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency dated November 20, 2014 regarding correspondence from your constituent (b) (6). Our Office of Congressional Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations asked that I respond because Ms. (b) (6) resides within EPA Region 9.

Ms. (b) (6) expressed her concern about the potential health effects of white fibrous material that she collected after she observed it falling from the sky on November 5, 2014 near her home in Chino Valley. She also saw military aircraft flying overhead around the time she noticed the material. She said that she was interviewed about the incident by a local TV news station, and we found that story archived online at: <http://www.kpho.com/story/27420731/mysterious-fibers-found-in-chino-valley>. The news station, CBS 5, reported that it brought samples of the material to the Forensic Science Lab at Grand Canyon University, which declared it was a mixture of wheat, gluten, flour and bacitracin (an antibiotic), possibly for veterinary use.

Our office contacted Ms. (b) (6) directly about the incident, and on December 4 she forwarded directly to us by email the results she obtained from a laboratory that showed the fibers contained small amounts of metallic aluminum, barium and strontium.

Unfortunately, the EPA has no specific program responsible for the investigation of this type of incident, and the EPA is not aware of any deliberate actions to release chemical or biological agents into the atmosphere. However, some aspects of aviation emissions are regulated through the efforts of several government agencies in the United States. The EPA, under the Clean Air Act, has established commercial aircraft engine exhaust emissions standards for certain emittants associated with ground-level air pollution. Jet engine exhaust contains oxides of nitrogen (NOx) and hydrocarbons that contribute to ozone formation. These emissions standards are enforced by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Ms. (b) (6) may be interested in the information available on EPA's website regarding our aviation regulatory activity (<http://www.epa.gov/otaq/aviation.htm>). The right side of that website includes links to a number of other helpful resources, including fact sheets. In addition,

I have attached (via email) three fact sheets prepared by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, a federal agency within the U.S. Department of Health, with toxicity profiles on aluminum, barium, and strontium, all naturally occurring elements.

We trust this information will be helpful in responding to your constituent's concerns. If we can be of further assistance, please call our Congressional Liaison, Brent Maier, at (415) 947-4256.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Michael B." followed by a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that ends in a small upward tick.

Michael Bandrowski

Manager

Office of Air Toxics, Radiation and Indoor Air